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Software Development I

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Agile Versus Waterfall

Investigate what “Agile Development” is about and compare it to the Waterfall Model.

Agile development is an iterative development process that theoretically allows all teams working on a project as well as the customer to be on the same page throughout the project. The idea is to plan scheduled releases of features of the project. There is then a meeting between all the teams involved and the customer to reevaluate the previous schedule based on customer satisfaction (more specifically if there are any further features the customer wants or any that are no longer necessary) and upon any new information gathered about the project. This process iterates every time a release is scheduled to hopefully ensure that everyone involved is always on the same page and that the customer is getting what he or she is looking for.

The waterfall model describes a sequential straight-shot development process in which each step “flows” to the next (like a waterfall). There are six basic phases of this model: getting and understanding the system requirements, analyzing, designing, coding, testing, and operating. In theory, the teams do not move on to the next phase until the previous phase has been reviewed and checked off. The idea behind this model is to get it right the first time and avoid costly after-the-fact changes.

There are, of course, many differences between these two processes. Among these are interactions with the customer: in Agile, the customer is frequently involved to check the teams’ work, while in the waterfall model the customer receives exactly what he or she requested in their specs at the beginning of the project. The waterfall method also usually gets the project done faster but risks dissatisfaction from the customer if he decides that he wants some other feature(s).